

NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

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REPS. MARKEY, TIERNEY, MEEHAN INVESTIGATE ADDITIONAL SEABROOK DOCUMENTS

Documents Show Security Guards Overworked, Security Boss Unqualified

Washington, DC: Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior Member of the Homeland Security Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee, the panel which oversees the regulation of nuclear reactors, Representative John F. Tierney (D-MA) the only New England member on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and Representative Martin T. Meehan, a senior Member of the House Armed Services Committee and the Ranking Democrat on the Terrorism Subcommittee, today released a third letter to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) regarding serious security problems at the Seabrook nuclear power plant.

"Two weeks ago we learned that the security fence at Seabrook has been broken for months," said Rep. Markey. "Last week additional physical security problems were disclosed. This week it turns out that the reactor spokesperson who dismissed my earlier concerns wasn't telling the truth, and the head of security at Seabrook doesn't have ANY security experience whatsoever. Not only does the security problem at Seabrook seem more serious with each passing week, but now it appears the reactor's owner isn't being straight with the public."

"While we are pleased to hear that the NRC has launched an investigation, it must be thorough enough to adequately address the serious issues we have raised. We will continue to press the NRC to immediately address our security concerns," said Rep. Tierney.

"In this age of terrorist threats, it is inexcusable for a nuclear power plant to have so many holes in its security defenses," said Rep. Meehan. "With millions of Massachusetts and New Hampshire residents living in close proximity to the Seabrook reactor there is no room for complacency or error. It is frightening that Seabrook's own condition report last month found its security operations inadequate, yet the plant management refuses to acknowledge a problem. I believe the Nuclear Regulatory Commission needs to take immediate action to rectify this situation."

On May 25, 2005, Reps. Markey and Tierney sent a letter to the NRC that called for an investigation into an inoperable perimeter intrusion detection system, and the reactor operator's efforts to compensate for the perimeter security failures by forcing the security guard forces to work so many hours that they were in violation of the Commission's overtime regulation. In a May 26, 2005 article by the Associated Press, a plant spokesman was quoted as stating that "at no time has Seabrook ever been in a position that it can't protect public health and safety," adding that the plant's safety systems "are multilayered and not isolated to any one system." However, several documents obtained by the Congressmen and released today call this statement into question, such as a May 4, 2005 Condition Report that states that the "Newly Appointed Security Manager has no security background experience, lack of technical expertise will preclude this

individual from providing appropriate direction and oversight to restore internal & external confidence in Security organization.”

The document identifies other critical threats in the staffing of this nuclear facility detailing that, “Selection of a security manager with no experience shows a lack of understanding on a station and/or corporate level of what is required to make the security organization healthy and successful. The recent root cause (05-2422) cited lack of security manager technical knowledge as a contributing cause to failure to ensure all aspects of the security order were met.”

Though a reactor spokesman stated in previous press reports that the overtime allegation made by the Congressmen is “completely erroneous,” adding that “we have no idea where Markey is getting this,” the documents released today indicate that in fact there have been several incidents involving overworked security guard forces. For example, one May 17, 2005 Condition Report states that “Two Security Officers on Backshift exceeded the Individual Work hour limits when they were called in to support potential Compensatory posts.”

Reps. Markey, Tierney and Meehan will continue to push for action on these security failures. The Congressmen’s letter to the NRC concludes that these documents “do not inspire confidence that Seabrook has ‘never been in a position that it can’t protect public health and safety,’ as Mr. Griffith asserted. The discrepancies between the Seabrook spokesman’s statements and the documentation we have obtained leads us not only to continue to have a high level of concern regarding the security posture at Seabrook, but in addition, to question whether statements made on behalf of the reactor licensee have any basis in reality.”

Responding to initial inquiries from Rep. Markey and Rep. Tierney and a visit to the site from Rep. Meehan, the NRC launched an inspection this week of the Seabrook facility. Though the inspection is part of ongoing security checks, the NRC spokesman said they would be looking into the concerns raised by the Congressmen.

For a copy of the Congressmen’s letter or more information regarding Rep. Markey’s or Rep. Tierney’s other work in the area of nuclear reactor security, please see www.house.gov/markey or www.house.gov/tierney

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